#### Intrigue, Suspense, and Academia

That Cambridge, Massachusetts is a college town is never more apparent than in autumn, when the low-angled afternoon sun changes from gold to amber. It might be hard to let go of summer, but here in Cambridge there is a definite feeling that something exciting is about to happen. And it is - the academic year is beginning!

To celebrate this inevitable time of year, here is a list of fun and compelling novels whose common theme is college: college students, professors, roommates, ancient books, dusty Ivy League libraries, and secret societies that only meet at night, to name a few. The settings in many of these novels sound very much like our Cambridge, but of course the names are changed. All of these titles are available at Cambridge Public Libraries, under Fiction or Mystery. When you click on the link for many of these books, you will see an option to request an eBook or an audio book as well.

### The Poison Tree / Erin Kelly

A psychological thriller about family secrets, college students, brother and sister relationships, and love triangles set in present day London, with flashbacks to a sultry summer in the 1990's when it all began with a handwritten notice on a college bulletin board.

## The Likeness / Tana French

Detective Cassie Maddox goes undercover to live with four graduate students whose housemate (Lexie Madison) is found stabbed in an abandoned cottage in the woods. Since Cassie happens to look exactly like Lexie, she assumes the identity of the dead girl, and pretends she survived the stabbing. What unfolds is a thrilling and suspenseful tale which is hard to put down.

# Special Topics in Calamity Physics / Marisha Pessl

The first half of this book is about the relationship between 16-year-old Blue van Meer and her college professor father, who flit around the country, living in various college towns, mostly for one year at a time. During her senior year of high school, Blue is befriended by a group of charismatic friends (the "Bluebloods") and the hip part-time teacher Hannah, who takes in this group of students and mentors them. But when one of Hannah's friends drowns mysteriously, shocking secrets emerge about this group of students and leads to a confluence of mysteries, including murder. Although this long book seems to start a bit slowly, it soon picks up speed and keeps the reader's attention up to the astonishing ending.

### The Historian / Elizabeth Kostova

This is another book about a motherless 16-year-old girl with an academic father. However, this one takes place all over Europe, including Oxford University, and goes back and forth in time. It starts in 1972 when an American girl living in Amsterdam discovers a weird ancient yellowed manuscript in her father's library. This "book" has an image of a dragon in the center associated with Dracula and it doesn't appear to be a joke. This leads the narrator, our heroine (her name is never given), into a worldwide quest to learn the truth behind the myth of Dracula. This isn't exactly a horror story – it's an incredible and eerie gothic novel and a historical thriller. Among the cast of bizarre characters are vampires and an evil, creepy librarian who seems determined to stop any research on the subject of Dracula.

### Tolstoy Lied / Rachel Kadish

In Anna Karenina, Tolstoy famously wrote, "Happy families are all alike; every unhappy family is unhappy in its own way." Tracy Farber is a 33-year-old literature professor at a prestigious university in New York City. She loves her job, her students, and is on the verge of becoming tenured. At peace with being single, she couldn't be happier (she thinks), so she sets out to disprove Tolstoy's theory that only unhappiness is interesting. This book is funny, romantic and fun to read.

### The Magicians: a novel / Lev Grossman

Quentin Coldwater, a high school senior from Brooklyn, is secretly obsessed with a children's fantasy book series set in the magical world of Fillory. He is thrilled when he is suddenly invited to enroll in an exclusive College of Modern Sorcery. After graduating from college, he and his new friends are admitted into a highly exclusive, secret society of magic in upstate New York, where they makes a stunning discovery: Fillory is real. But the land of Quentin's fantasies turns out to be much darker and more dangerous than he could have imagined. A page turner! (Plus, if you like this book, the author has written a brand new sequel called The Magician King.)

If you enjoy these stories, here are three more related to colleges. Enjoy!

That Old Cape Magic / Richard Russo

Blue Angel: a novel / Francine Prose

On Beauty / Zadie Smith

The Night Climbers: a novel / Ivo Stourton